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## Artifacts and oddities: Celebrating 125 years of preserving Illinois history

A photograph of a man's Civil War diary showing his penmanship before and after an arm amputation is a prized possession for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

It's also one of the artifacts included in a newly published book noting the library's 125th anniversary.

Members of each of the library's departments selected "treasures" such as the diary to be included in "Treasures of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library."

**\*\* Take a five-question quiz about some of the library's treasures \*\***

The "treasures" aren't necessarily Lincoln-related, but such items are included: an 1848 letter from Lincoln to his wife, Mary; a telegraph from Lincoln's son, Robert, to his uncle; and the photograph of the slain president in his coffin, among them.

There are also items related to Illinois' colorful history, such as:

- \* The key to the hotel room where a large amount of cash was found following the death of Secretary of State Paul Powell in 1970.

- \* A copy of a veto of a bill requiring leashes for cats.

- \* Receipts signed by Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that briefly thrived in Nauvoo before Smith's murder.

Glenna R. Schroeder-Lein, the book's editor and the manuscripts librarian for the library at 112 N. Sixth St., choose the Civil War diary as among her favorites.

Pages from James M. Taylor's 1864 Civil War diary (Company C, 96th Illinois Infantry) show his right-handed penmanship before he was wounded and his early left-handed efforts after his amputation. Taylor's before-amputation writings include weather reports. After-amputation writings include talk about his pain.

"Saturday, May 28, 1864. H G (Health Good) but feel quite weak from the pain I had suffered and the effects of the Amputation. Mrs. Ranney wrote two letters, one to each of my sisters for me, and told James Bater's folks I wanted about 20 Dollars in money, did not open my arm today at all to dress it," according to Taylor's diary.

Schroeder-Lein chose the diary and a Jan. 15, 1863, letter by Asher Miller to his niece and nephew for inclusion in the book because of her interest in Civil War medicine.

"Those are some of my favorite informative pieces because when you have Civil War letters, you might get just the weather or 'We marched here and there. It was cold. It was rainy,' or you may get some really quite useful information," Schroeder-Lein said. "The letter that I chose particularly describes his experiences working in a hospital in Tennessee after the battle of Murfreesboro. It was a very informative letter in a different way than some of the others."

"Treasures" will be educational for people who assume the library has solely Lincoln-related collections. The book showcases 85 artifacts from among more than 12 million items in the library's collections.

"We have so much more than just Lincoln," Schroeder-Lein said. "The library, originally being the Illinois State Historical Library, has been collecting things that are Illinois-related for 125 years."

### 'Stuff that you wouldn't necessarily expect'

Established in 1889, the Illinois State Historical Library was renamed the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in 2004 after its move from below the Old State Capitol to 112 N. Sixth St. It's across the street from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, which opened in 2005 at 212 N. Sixth St.

Although the library changed its name and location, its mission has remained the same, Schroeder-Lein said.

"We still have a state mandate to collect Illinois materials," she said. "That's part of the reason to celebrate the library and help people understand that we really still have all this Illinois material."

"Sometimes, it's rather loosely related — if a part of the family lived here, so we've got their correspondence from Hawaii or something from the family member. There are all kinds of stuff that you wouldn't necessarily expect."

A treasure of the library, in part, can be "something unexpected in Library holdings," according to "Treasures." It can be many things, including "something unique or near-unique to the Library."

Among other treasures noted in the book:

- \* A grant of property issued in 1274 by Johannes I, bishop of London. A vellum document handwritten in Latin, it's the oldest item in the library's collection.

- \* A dinner bell that belonged to Robert Lincoln, who served as Secretary of War and as an ambassador to Great Britain after his father Abraham's death.

- \* A board game from 1890, "Round the World with Nellie Bly," the journalist who traveled around the world in just over 72 days in 1889.

- \* "An Effect in Blue" valentine drawn and written by Susan Lawrence Dana, a Springfield socialite and activist prominent in the early 20th century.

"We tried to have things that are representative of the library," Schroeder-Lein said.

"There are some things that are special like the Gettysburg Address that you can hardly leave out, but there are other things."

"Like we have more than a thousand collections that have a Civil War component in the Manuscripts Department, and so we have a representative letter and a representative diary. We ended up choosing those because they happen to be some of my favorites."



PHOTO/ ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

The key to the hotel room where Illinois Secretary of State Paul Powell's hidden cash was found after his death. The key is part of the holdings at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library that are highlighted in a new book.

Without the publication of "Treasures" people wouldn't "necessarily know about all the material the library has" Schroeder-Lein said.

"I think they just think, 'Oh, Lincoln Library. Well, all they have is Lincoln,'" she said. "That, in fact, is not all we have."

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**'Treasures of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library'**

**What: Book-release Party**

**When: 5-7 p.m. Sept. 23**

**Where: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. Sixth St. To make reservations, go to the "special event reservations" section at [presidentlincoln.illinois.gov](http://presidentlincoln.illinois.gov).**

**To get a copy:**

Published by Southern Illinois University Press, "Treasures" (\$22.50 paperback, \$39.50 hardcover) is sold at the gift shop of the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. It also can be ordered at [www.SIUpress.com](http://www.SIUpress.com) and online sellers such as [Amazon](http://Amazon) and [Barnes & Noble](http://Barnes & Noble).

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